

Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation 96-1

to DOE, EPA and CDPHE

Approved January 9, 1996

Rocky Flats Draft Vision

The Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board (RFCAB) is pleased to see that a vision is being developed for the Rocky Flats Site. It is necessary that the public, workers, the regulators, the site contractor, and the Department of Energy all understand where the site is heading. Further, it is imperative that the vision be a shared vision if there is to be a successful "cleanup" at Rocky Flats.

Unfortunately, the Draft Conceptual Vision of 11/8/95 does not lay the basis for a commonly shared vision. In fact, the Vision ignores key pieces of advice from the public on the future of the Rocky Flats Site; namely the priorities developed at the Rocky Flats Summit, the Future Site Use Working Group recommendations and the RFCAB recommendation on Waste Management at Rocky Flats. Three important ideas come from these pieces of advice:

1. Current budget constraints exist, however, they are a political "reality" and, therefore, subject to change. Current budget constraints should not drive long-term cleanup decisions.
2. "Initial" cleanup efforts for radionuclides need to achieve levels that are as protective of human health and the environment as is currently possible. Such levels need to be determined through a process that fully involves the public. The goal for final cleanup should be achievement of average background levels for Colorado, when technology allows for this in a cost-effective, environmentally sensitive manner. The federal government must be committed to the development of needed technology.
3. Radioactive waste disposal is not acceptable at Rocky Flats. DOE should develop plans for long-term storage of waste in a manner that is fully monitored and retrievable.

At this point, the Vision does not incorporate the above advice. In order for RFCAB to support any Vision for Rocky Flats, it is necessary that these principles be incorporated. We would also add to this list the principle that:

4. today's "solutions" for problems at Rocky Flats should not leave problems for future generations, or preclude future generations from going beyond these "solutions."

RFCAB is pleased to note that the Vision does recommend a new state-of-the-art facility for interim storage of plutonium, and a new facility for interim storage of transuranic waste. These are consistent with previous recommendations from RFCAB.

RFCAB is happy to have been able to provide advice to the Principals on the Draft Conceptual Vision for Rocky Flats. We would appreciate a response to our comments before the next workout session for the Rocky Flats Cleanup Agreement.

The Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board is a community advisory group that reviews and provides recommendations on cleanup plans for Rocky Flats, a former nuclear weapons plant outside of Denver, Colorado.

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